



Season 2017-18

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VITAL HOME MATCH THIS SATURDAY

Welcome to Parknews Last weekend was a blank one all round, with no Rosslyn Park side able to take the field – even the 4G was snowbound and frozen in places! The First XV match at Plymouth went through a protracted on / off saga when Plymouth had clearly made a supreme effort to put the match on, and a local referee passed the pitch as playable at 3:00PM on Friday afternoon. Earlier that morning Plymouth had been cut off completely. Rail services were suspended because of a breach of the sea wall at Dawlish, which flooded the track and washed away some of the ballast around the sleepers; the main road into town was ice-bound and closed. The prognosis by rail was poor: no service beyond Exeter, nor return travel guaranteed. With the roads re-opened, Team Manager Kojo Jecty looked at the possibility of going part way by train, then picking up a coach at Exeter or Tiverton, but before that could be taken any further the road was closed again after a pile-up!

Both clubs were keen that the match should go ahead if at all possible. Apart from other considerations, there is the pragmatic financial one that Plymouth have had earlier postponements that already fill every Saturday before the end of the season, so playing into May would be necessary. In this professional era that opens up the vista of possibly having to extend players' contracts in order to field a team, a significant expense most clubs will not have budgeted for.

With a poor weather forecast (heavy rain and several flood warnings in the Plymouth area) Park were between a rock and a hard place. It would cost not far south of £3,000 in travel costs alone to send the team, with the risk that the game might be called off anyway and – in the worst scenario – hefty accommodation bills if the weather closed in and it was impossible to travel back on the Saturday evening. There was also the consideration as to whether it was a responsible thing to do when the advice of the authorities was for avoiding non-essential travel. Should an employer expose its employees (the players) to the risk when there is advice not to travel?

Eventually, on the advice of the National Clubs Association (NCA) the governing body of the National Leagues, the game was called off. It is not what either club wanted to happen, particularly Albion who had put all their effort into ensuring it could go ahead, and certainly not those of us who had pre-booked travel and accommodation, but it was almost certainly the correct decision in the difficult circumstances. The match is expected to be rescheduled for Saturday 05 May, but at time of going to press that has yet to be confirmed.

Even the 4G was rendered 'unplayable', being covered in snow and frozen in places. The surface should cope with temperatures down to minus 5C but that is an academic consideration if it's got a hefty covering of snow and you can't see the pitch markings! Would it have been playable if we had the people available to sweep the snow from the pitch? Possibly, but the paths, entrances and most public areas around the ground were frozen solid in the extreme weather, almost inviting someone to meet with an accident. The only sensible decision was to close the ground.

So let's hope for some better weather this weekend when Darlington Mowden Park come visiting. Mowden are currently in second place in the League on 83 points, six points ahead of Plymouth Albion who have a match in hand. They will doubtless be all out to consolidate that position, and Park will clearly have to be at their very best to get the points that we need. On their travels thus far this season Mowden have delivered wins at Hull Ionians, Birmingham Moseley, Fylde, Caldy and Old Elthamians, while securing a draw at Bishops Stortford. Park can perhaps draw some comfort from the fact that they met with losses at Old Albanian (33-31) Blackheath (33-24) Esher (33-26) and Plymouth (34-19).

In the match at the Northern Echo Arena earlier this season Park suffered a heavy defeat by 7-36. It wasn't quite as one-sided as the scoreline suggests – Mowden discovered a defensive vulnerability and exploited it mercilessly with their fast wingers – but it was a painful experience and one the Park players will doubtless be keen to avenge.

Park full-back Henry Robinson joined us from Darlington Mowden Park, and will doubtless

Henry Robinson plays against his former club at the Rock this Saturday [Photo: David Whittam]



Saturday 10 March
Curtain Raiser

B XV v Belsize Park 2

Middlesex Merit 1
Home KO TBA

1st XV

v

Darlington M P

League

Home (4G) KO: 3:00PM

To book for the pre-match lunch please call David Booth in the Club Office on 020 8876 6044

Belsize Park 3 v Fours

Middlesex Merit 2
Away KO TBA

Farnham 2 v Nomads

Surrey Championship
Away KO TBA

Hatters not playing

Sunday 11 March

Slingbacks v London

Welsh

League

Home (4G) KO TBA

Clubhouse open - free admission

be determined to put on a good show against his old mates. In return they will doubtless extend to him the 'warm' welcome with which Rugby teams traditionally greet their former comrades! This Saturday Mowden probably start as favourites, but that means nothing once the teams are on the field. Please do come along and give the boys your full vocal support, the England match will be shown in the Clubhouse - Members can bring a friend for free!

We have a 'curtain raiser' on the main pitch at noon in the form of the **B XV**, in the running for the Middlesex Merit 1 title, playing **Belsize Park 2s** in an important league match. All of the 'Killer Bs' matches on the 4G this season have been really entertaining affairs, so please do come down early and give them a shout - the Clubhouse will already be open. The team really would appreciate your support.

Club sides

Will Thorogood reports that unfortunately, if we had known the "Big Thaw" was going to happen on Friday night/Saturday morning (sounds like a 1960's black and white film title), we could have played our games.

However, not to be. Anyway, games for this week, hopefully:

B's v Belsize Park 2's Home MMT1 Kick Off Noon-4G; 4's v Belsize Park 3'S Away MMT2; Nomads v Farnham 2's Away Surrey Championship. The Hatters are not playing

Slingbacks

On Sunday the **Slingbacks** are at home to London Welsh in a League local Derby, kicking off at 2:30. **London Welsh** are second in the table, two points behind Portsmouth but with a game in hand and so will be looking for a win to go top. The Slingbacks held Welsh for a long time in the away match earlier this season before the floodgates opened and it ended 42-0. But the Park girls have improved a lot since then and will be looking to avenge that defeat. As ever, there is no charge for admission and the Clubhouse will be open before, during and after the match.

The Slingbacks' match at home to Harlequins has been re-arranged for Sunday 29 April. Further details in due course.

Away travel

We have no 'away' matches until we face the runaway League leaders, **Coventry** (who could be Champions by then) on 07 April and **Birmingham Moseley** on 21 April. Cheap advance rail tickets for both of those matches are now on sale. Coventry play at Butts Park Arena, Butts Rd, Coventry CV1 3GE. It is walkable from the station, but every time we go there the layout of the paths and subways immediately by the station changes so we won't try to give directions for fear of causing confusion. Our regulars usually go into town for a pre-match refresher, but if you arrive at the ground there's a perfectly good local pub just the other side of the car park opposite the main stand.

We have not yet been formally advised of a date on which to play the

postponed match at **Plymouth Albion**, but the next free date that Albion have is Saturday 05 May. However, it might be best to hang fire on making travel arrangements until that is confirmed.

Masquerade Ball

For the first time in a while the Club is holding what used to be the Annual End-of-Season Ball, and it will be a very special event. The Masquerade Ball will take place at the Rock on Saturday 05 May. It will be a Black Tie dinner, dance and auction, with several other attractions. We are hoping the event will bring together the whole Rosslyn Park family – mini parents, coaches, club sides, ladies teams, players and admin staff. It will also contribute to two worthwhile causes: the Rosslyn Park Injury Trust and Cancer Research. You can find out more and book your tickets through the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/end-of-season-masquerade-ball-tickets-42625758792?aff=eac2>

We will also be running an end of season BBQ on the 29th April and details will follow shortly.

National 1 Focus

There were only two matches played in National 1 at the weekend, both of interest to us looking over our shoulders as we look to maintain National One status for next season. In the relegation Derby at **Fylde**, **Old Albanian** came back from a two-try deficit to win by 31-21, leaving Fylde with a problem that is only four points away from defying simple arithmetic. Any result other than a win at Blackheath this Saturday and Fylde are down. OA are not quite dead and buried yet, though. They have endured the same sort of injury run we have had, but emerging from it they have put together two successive wins. They are still seven points behind **Hull Ionians** and **Loughborough** – both of whom have a game in hand – but play Loughborough at home this coming Saturday. Loughborough got two points from a 32-33 home defeat by **Birmingham Moseley**.

This week's matches:

Ampthill v Plymouth Albion

Blackheath v Fylde

Birmingham Moseley v Cambridge

Esher v Bishops Stortford

Hull Ionians v Cald

Old Albanian v Loughborough

Rosslyn Park v Darlington Mowden Park

Next Parknews

Parknews appears on the Club website weekly, usually between Tuesday lunchtime / Wednesday afternoon. Contributions are always welcome and the deadline is normally at noon on the Tuesday of publication. If you would like to receive a 'tweet' immediately it appears then subscribe to the @RPNoseyParker twitterfeed. Letters and other contributions from readers are always welcome: the usual deadline is around noon on Tuesdays.



SAVE THE DATE
SATURDAY MAY 5TH, 2018

MASQUERADE
Ball

BLACK TIE CHARITY BALL IN AID OF
ROSSLYN PARK INJURY TRUST AND CANCER RESEARCH

DINNER, DANCING AND AUCTION

LOCATION: ROSSLYN PARK RUGBY CLUB

PUT THE DATE IN THE DIARY AND WE'LL BE IN TOUCH
WITH MORE INFORMATION VERY SOON.